



Pride and Shame

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In excess, both pride and shame can be destructive forces, yet to cultivate a healthy ego, one needs a moderate dosing of each. In this episode of Texting, **Elana Stein Hain** and **Christine Hayes** unpack Tractate Yoma 22b-23a, which highlights the tension between the need to stand up for one's self and the imperative to be magnanimous and forgiving. What emerges is the importance of interpersonal relationships, as we strive to treat others as we want to be treated.

*This source sheet is part of the April 8, 2024 episode of the podcast **TEXTING with Elana Stein Hain** which delves deeply into Jewish texts to guide and inspire us as we grapple with the concerns and meaning of this moment. Join Elana as she addresses the issues of our day through the lens of classical Jewish texts in conversation with Hartman scholars.*

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I. Healthy Ego: Humility and Pride

1. Babylonian Talmud Yoma 22b – 23a

אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל: מפני מה לא נמשכה מלכות בית שאול — מפני שלא היה בו שום דופי, דאמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יהוּצָדָק: אין מעמידין פרנס על הציבור אלא אם כן קופה של שרצים תלויה לו מאחוריו. שאם תזוח דעתו עליו אומרין לו: חזור לאחריך.

Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: Why did the kingship of the house of Saul not continue on to succeeding generations? It is because there was no flaw in his ancestry; he was of impeccable lineage. As Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehotzadak: One appoints a leader over the community only if he has a box full of creeping animals hanging behind him, i.e., he has something inappropriate in his ancestry that preceded him. Why is that? It is so that if he exhibits a haughty attitude toward the community, one can say to him: Turn and look behind you and be reminded of your humble roots. This is why David's kingdom lasted while Saul's did not, as David descended from a family with problematic ancestry, namely Tamar (see Genesis, chapter 38) and Ruth the Moabite (see Ruth 4:18–22).

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: מפני מה נענש שאול — מפני שמחל על כבודו, שנאמר: "ויבני בליעל אמרו מה יושענו זה ויבזוהו ולא הביאו לו מנחה ויהי כמחריש", וכתיב: "וינעל נחש העמוני ויחן על גבש גלעד וגו'".

Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: Why was Saul punished in that he was ultimately led to commit the sins described above? Because at the very outset of his reign he inappropriately forwent his royal honor, as it is stated with regard to Saul's inauguration: "And some base fellows said: How can this man save us? So they disparaged him and brought him no present. But he made himself as if he did not hear" (I Samuel 10:27). And it is stated immediately afterward: "And Nahash the Ammonite marched up and encamped against Jabesh-gilead" (I Samuel 11:1). The implication is that if Saul had forcefully assumed his throne, Nahash would not have dared to attack the people of Jabesh-gilead. In this way, his humility led to the crisis.

2. 1 Samuel 10:26-27

וְגַם־שָׂאוּל הִלְךְ לְבֵיתוֹ גְּבַעְתָּהּ וַיִּלְכוּ עִמּוֹ הַחֵיל אֲשֶׁר־נָגַע אֱלֹהִים בְּלִבָּם:
וַיִּבְנֵי בְלִיעֵל אֲמָרוּ מַה־יִּשְׁעֵנוּ זֶה וַיִּבְזֹּהוּ וְלֹא־הִבִּיאוּ לוֹ מִנְחָה וַיְהִי כְּמַחְרִישׁ:

Saul also went home to Gibeah, accompanied by upstanding men whose hearts God had touched. But some scoundrels said, "How can this fellow save us?" So they scorned him and brought him no gift. But he pretended not to mind.

II. Revenge or Rolling Over?

3. Babylonian Talmud Yoma 22b – 23a (cont.)

וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מִשּׁוֹם רַבִּי שִׁמּוֹן בֶּן יְהוֹצְדָק: כָּל תַּלְמִיד חֲכָם

And Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehotzadak: Any Torah scholar...

שְׂאִינוּ נוֹקָם וְנוֹטֵר כְּנָחָשׁ — אֵינוֹ תַלְמִיד חֲכָם. וְהִכְתִּיב: "לֹא תִקּוֹם וְלֹא תִטּוֹר!" הֲהוּא, בְּמִמּוֹן הוּא דְכָתִיב, דְּתִנָּיָא: אֵיזוֹ הִיא נְקִימָה וְאֵיזוֹ הִיא נְטִירָה? נְקִימָה — אָמַר לוֹ: הֲשִׂאֵלְנִי מִגְלָד, אָמַר לוֹ: לֹא. לְמַחֵר אָמַר לוֹ הוּא: הֲשִׂאֵלְנִי קֶרְדוּמָה, אָמַר לוֹ: אֵינִי מִשִּׂאֵלְדָה, כְּדָרְדָה שְׂלֵא הֲשִׂאֵלְתַּנִּי — זֶה הִיא נְקִימָה.

...who does not avenge himself and bear a grudge like a snake when insulted is not considered a Torah scholar at all, as it is important to uphold the honor of Torah and its students by reacting harshly to insults. The Gemara asks: But isn't it written explicitly in the Torah: "You shall not take vengeance nor bear any grudge against the children of your people" (Leviticus 19:18)? The Gemara responds: That prohibition is written with regard to monetary matters and not personal insults, as it was taught in a baraita: What is revenge and what is bearing a grudge? Revenge is illustrated by the following example: One said to his fellow: Lend me your sickle, and he said: No. The next day he, the one who had refused to lend the sickle, said to the other person: Lend me your ax. If he said to him: I will not lend to you, just as you did not lend to me, that is revenge.

וְאֵיזוֹ הִיא נְטִירָה? אָמַר לוֹ: הֲשִׂאֵלְנִי קֶרְדוּמָה, אָמַר לוֹ: לֹא. לְמַחֵר אָמַר לוֹ: הֲשִׂאֵלְנִי חֲלוּקָה! אָמַר לוֹ: הִילָד, אֵינִי כְמוֹתָהּ שְׂלֵא הֲשִׂאֵלְתַּנִּי. זֶה הִיא נְטִירָה.

And what is bearing a grudge? If one said to his fellow: Lend me your ax, and he said: No, and the next day he, the one who had refused to lend the ax, said to the other man: Lend me your robe; if the first one said to him: Here it is, as I am not like you, who would not lend to me, that is bearing a grudge. Although he does not respond to his friend's inconsiderate behavior in kind, he still makes it known to his friend that he resents his inconsiderate behavior. This baraita shows that the prohibition relates only to monetary matters, such as borrowing and lending.

וְצַעֲרָא דְגוּפָא לָא? וְהָא תִּנְיָא: הִנְעֲלָבִין וְאִינְן עוֹלָבִין, שׁוֹמְעִין חֲרָפְתּוֹ וְאִינְן מְשִׁיבִין, עוֹשִׂין מֵאֲהָבָה וּשְׂמִיחִין בְּיִסּוּרֵין, עֲלִיָּהוּ הַכְּתוּב אוֹמֵר: "וְאֹהֲבָיו כָּצִאתָ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּגִבּוֹרָתוֹ!"

The Gemara asks: But does the prohibition against vengeance really not relate also to matters of personal anguish suffered by someone? Wasn't it taught in a baraita: Those who are insulted but do not insult others, who hear themselves being shamed but do not respond, who act out of love for God, and who remain happy in their suffering, about them the verse states: "They that love Him be as the sun when it goes forth in its might" (Judges 5:31). This baraita shows that one should forgive personal insults as well as wrongs in monetary matters.

לְעוֹלָם דְּנִקִּיט לִיהָ בְּלִיבָיָה:

The Gemara responds that the prohibition against taking vengeance and bearing a grudge indeed applies to cases of personal anguish; however, actually, the scholar may keep resentment in his heart, though he should not act on it or remind the other person of his insulting behavior.

4. Babylonian Talmud Berachot 7b

וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מִשׁוּם רַבִּי שִׁמּוֹן בֶּן יוֹחָי: מִנֵּין שָׂאִין מְרָצִין לוֹ לְאָדָם בְּשַׁעַת כְּעֶסוֹ — שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "פָּנַי יֵלְכוּ וְהִנְחֹתִי לְדָךְ."

And Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: From where is it derived that one must not placate a person while the person is in the throes of his anger? As it is stated: "My face will go, and I will give you rest" (Exodus 33:14).

III. The Other Side Must Do Something!

5. Babylonian Talmud Yoma 22b – 23a (cont.)

וְהָאָמַר רַבָּא: כָּל הַמַּעֲבִיר עַל מַדּוּתָיו — מַעֲבִירִין לוֹ עַל כָּל פְּשָׁעָיו! דְּמַפְיִסוּ לִיהָ וּמַפְיִיס.

The Gemara asks: But didn't Rava say: With regard to whoever forgoes his reckonings with others for injustices done to him, the heavenly court in turn forgoes punishment for all his sins? The Gemara answers: Indeed, even a scholar who is insulted must forgive insults, but that is only in cases where his antagonist has sought to appease him, in which case he should allow himself to be appeased toward him. However, if no apology has been offered, the scholar should not forgive him, in order to uphold the honor of the Torah.

6. Eicha (Lamentations) Rabba 1

אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמן, בשעה שחרב בית המקדש בא אברהם לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא בוכה וממרט זקנו ותולש שערות ראשו ומכה את פניו וקורע את בגדיו ואפר על ראשו, והיה מהלך בבית המקדש וסופד וצועק, אמר לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא מפני מה נשתנית מכל אמה ולשון שבאתי לידי בוש וכלמה זאת, כיון שראוהו מלאכי השרת אף הם קשרו הספד שורות שורות ואומרין (ישעיה לג, ח): נשמו מסלות שבת עבר ארח וגוי, מאי נשמו מסלות, אמרו מלאכי השרת לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא מסלות שהתקנת לירושלים שלא יהו עוברי דרכים פוסקים מהם היאך היו לשממה. שבת עבר ארח, אמרו מלאכי השרת לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא דרכים שהיו ישראל עוברים ושבים בהם בחגים היאך שבתו. הפר ברית, אמרו מלאכי השרת לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא רבונו של עולם, הופר ברית של אברהם אביהם, שעל ידו מתישב העולם, ועל ידו הכירו בועולם שאתה אל עליון קונה שמים וארץ. מאס ערים. אמרו מלאכי השרת לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא מאסת ירושלים וציון לאחר שבחרת בהם, הדיא הוא דכתיב (ירמיה יד, יט): המאס מאסת את יהודה [ואם בציון געלה נפש וגוי. (ישעיה לג, ח): לא חשב אנוש. אמרו מלאכי השרת לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא אפלו כדור אנוש שהיו ראש לעובדי עבודת כוכבים לא חשבת את ישראל. באותה שעה נזקק הקדוש ברוך הוא למלאכי השרת, אמר להם, מה לכם קושרין מספד בענין הזה שורות שורות. אמרו לפני רבונו של עולם, מפני אברהם אהבך שבא לבידת וספד ורכה מפני מה לא השגחת עליו, אמר להם מיום שנפטר אהבי מלפני לבית עולמו לא בא לביתי, ועכשו (ירמיה יא, טו):

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahman said: When the Temple was destroyed, Abraham came before the Holy One blessed be He weeping, pulling out his beard, tearing out the hair of his head, striking his face, rending his garments, ashes on his head, and he was walking in the Temple and lamenting and screaming. He said before the Holy One blessed be He: 'Why am I different from all nations and tongues that I have come to this state of shame and humiliation?' When the ministering angels saw him, they too composed lamentations standing in rows and saying: "[Behold, their angels cry out outside....] The highways are desolate, wayfarers have ceased; [he breached the covenant, rejected cities, regarded no man]" (Isaiah 33:7–8). What is "the highways are desolate"? The ministering angels said before the Holy One blessed be He: 'The highways to Jerusalem that You prepared so that travelers would never cease from them, how have they become desolation?' "Wayfarers have ceased" – the ministering angels said before the Holy One blessed be He: 'The ways upon which Israel would travel on the festivals, how have they become idle?' "Breach the covenant" – the ministering angels said before the Holy One blessed be He: 'Master of the universe, the covenant of their patriarch Abraham has been breached, by means of whom the world was settled, and by means of whom You were recognized in the world as God on High, Maker of the heavens and the earth.' "Rejected cities" – the ministering angels said before the Holy One blessed be He: 'Have You rejected Jerusalem and Zion after You chose them?' That is what is written: "Did You reject Judah, did Your soul loathe

Zion...?” (Jeremiah 14:19). “Regarded no man [*enosh*]” – the ministering angels said before the Holy One blessed be He: ‘You did not consider Israel even like the generation of Enosh, who were the originators of idol worshippers.’ At that moment, the Holy One blessed be He attended to the ministering angels. He said to them: ‘Why are you composing lamentations like this, standing in rows?’ They said to Him: ‘Master of the universe, why did You not pay attention to Abraham, Your beloved, who came to Your House and lamented and wept?’ He said to them: ‘From the day that My beloved passed away from before Me to his eternal home, he did not come to My House, and now: “What has My beloved to do in My House?”’ (Jeremiah 11:15).